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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 07 ANKARA 001706

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SENSITIVE

DEPT FOR PRM/ANE, EUR/SE AND NEA/NGA
DEPT PASS USAID FOR BHA/OFDA - WGARVELINK/RLIBBY AND FFP
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TAGS: [EAID](#) [IZ](#) [MOPS](#) [PREF](#) [PREL](#) [TU](#) [WFP](#)

SUBJECT: PRM A/S DEWEY'S MEETINGS WITH GOT AND HUMANITARIAN ORGANIZATIONS

REF: E

(U) Classified by Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Deutsch for reasons 1.5 (B) and (D).

Summary:

1. (C) An interagency delegation led by PRM Assistant Secretary Arthur Dewey discussed a range of Iraq-related

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humanitarian planning issues with the GOT, humanitarian organizations and representatives of the two Kurdish-administered areas of northern Iraq. Dewey emphasized the U.S. interest in working through UN agencies in providing relief, and sought Turkish cooperation in allowing transit of humanitarian relief to Iraq. He also maintained that any role for the Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) in northern Iraq would have to be coordinated with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and with the UN. Dewey proposed to MFA a tripartite, civilian mechanism with representatives of the GOT, UN, USG and possibly other humanitarian organizations and donors to coordinate aid through Turkey. MFA responded favorably to the proposal, but advised that it would need to consult with other agencies before providing an authoritative response. MFA also agreed that ICRC and UN agencies would have the mandate for relief in northern Iraq. Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, Kurdistan Democratic Party and UNICEF representatives emphasized the hostility of the population in northern Iraq to Turkish intervention. The International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies representative said he has raised concerns about the TRC's planned role in northern Iraq with the TRC leadership, but fears that the Turkish military may force TRC's hand. UN representatives raised a number of concerns, including anticipated delays in restarting the Oil for Food Program after the onset of a conflict. End Summary.

2. (SBU) Assistant Secretary for Population, Migration and Refugees Arthur Dewey, accompanied by Lawrence Bartlett, Deputy Director, PRM/ANE; Dr. Joseph Collins, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense; William Garvelink, USAID Deputy Assistant Administrator; Richard Owens, Deputy Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance, Defense Department Office of Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance; and David Tarantino, Office of the Secretary of Defense; discussed contingency planning and humanitarian assistance issues in Ankara March 12 and 13. Military Coordination and Liaison Command (MCLC) Commanding General Peter Osman joined in the delegation's meetings with the GOT. The group met with a GOT interagency group led by the Deputy Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Nabi Sensoy; Major General Suphi Acar, Turkish General Staff, J-5; UN agency representatives in a meeting led by Resident Coordinator Alfredo Witschi-Cestari; and Turkish Red Crescent President Ertan Gonen. A/S Dewey also met with Carl Naucner, Head of Delegation, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC); Safeen Dizayee, Ankara Representative, Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), and Bahros Galali, Ankara Representative, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK); and Jean-Marie Fakhouri, UNHCR Regional Coordinator for the Iraq Situation, Amin Awad, UNHCR Deputy Regional Coordinator for the Iraq Situation, and Gesche Karrenbrock, UNHCR Turkey Representative on March 13.

GOT Interagency Meeting

13. (SBU) The U.S. delegation held a wide-ranging discussion on assistance issues with an interagency group chaired by Deputy Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs Nabi Sensoy. The Turkish side included representatives of the Prime Ministry, Emergency Management General Directorate, TGS, and Customs, but only MFA officials addressed our delegation.

14. (SBU) Outlining USG priorities in humanitarian assistance for Iraq and its neighbors, A/S Dewey stated that the U.S. sought to share the costs of providing aid with other donors, primarily through the UN system. He noted that the UN Regional Humanitarian Coordination Office in Cyprus, which he had just visited, is now in place, and that the USG sought to create the conditions which would allow a swift return of UN personnel to Iraq after the potential conflict is over. Dewey maintained that the World Food Program (WFP) would be critical in restarting the Oil for Food (OFF) Program, which would likely be disrupted with the onset of hostilities. The key problem now is funding the relief effort. He noted that solving the food issue and ensuring that the Iraqis feel secure that relief will come to them timely is essential to preventing mass population movements.

15. (SBU) Coordination Mechanism: Dewey also noted that the U.S.) Kuwaiti Humanitarian Operations Center (HOC) had been activated and would help the humanitarian effort, but that a different mechanism should be adopted in Turkey. He suggested a civilian, trilateral mechanism with the GOT, UN agencies and USG as the key participants, but which could include other relevant humanitarian organizations and donors. Dewey suggested that the group meet at the policy level in Ankara, and that subgroups working on more operational issues meet in Diyarbakir and perhaps Silopi. Sensoy responded that the GOT would consider the issue and respond to us quickly. Note: MFA officials subsequently told us that they accepted this proposal, but needed to consult within the GOT before providing us with a definitive response. End Note.

16. (C) Sensoy noted that, following the March 1 vote on deployment of U.S. troops, Turkey's role in the Iraq crisis was not clear, but he assured us that regardless of whether Turkey is a member of the military coalition or not, the GOT would like to cooperate on humanitarian issues. He also provided an overview of humanitarian logistics and routes, and passed us list of storage facilities, ports, airports, and roads designated for HA (septel).

17. (C) Turkish Plans for Camps in Northern Iraq: Recalling Turkey's refugee debacle in 1991, Sensoy maintained that the GOT was determined to prevent a recurrence. He noted the geographic limitation to Turkey's accession to the Geneva Refugee Convention, and said the Turks expect third countries to resettle refugees/asylum-seekers entering Turkey from Iraq. MFA confirmed the GOT intends to set up 12 camps (Humanitarian Assistance Collection Zones) HACZs) inside Iraq, and six additional camps in Turkey as a last resort. In response to a question from the U.S. delegation, Sensoy stated that the 12 camps in Iraq would be located 45 to 50 kilometers away from the Turkish border, unless Turkey is not part of the military coalition. In that case, the camps would be located in the immediate vicinity of the border.

18. (C) Sensoy said the GOT plans to assist up to 138,000 to 170,000 displaced persons (DPs). This will utilize about 60 percent of the Turk Red Crescent (TRC) resources. TRC will hold back other 40 percent for domestic natural disaster contingencies. TRC may dip into these stocks if it receives guarantees of replenishment from IFRC or another source. Note: The GOT has said it is planning the capacity to provide for 276,000 DPs. Sensoy's figure of 170,000, which is just over 60 percent of 276,000, probably corresponds to TRC's need to reserve 40 percent of capacity. End Note.

19. (SBU) NGO Access: NGOs seeking to assist in the HACZs must apply to MFA and sign an MOU defining their activities with the GOT. Sensoy emphasized that MFA would be selective with respect to security concerns in vetting NGOs. NGOs intending to cross the frontier to provide goods and assistance in Iraq beyond Turkey's camps must apply to MFA, but will not need to sign an MOU.

110. (C) Northern Iraq Relief Mandate: Dewey laid down the marker that the ICRC and UNHCR would have the mandate for relief activity on the Iraqi side of the border, and that any TRC assistance would have to proceed in coordination with those organizations. Sensoy stated that the GOT would coordinate with ICRC and UNHCR, and that it would only build camps in northern Iraq if they were needed.

¶11. (C) HDRs: Turks Propose Local Procurement: Collins raised longstanding U.S. request to site one million humanitarian daily rations (HDRs) in Turkey. Sensoy responded that Turkey had the ability to produce HDRs locally and that this would likely be more cost-effective. The Turkish delegation provided a brochure issued by Unifo Food Industry and Trading Company describing its Meals Ready to Eat (MREs). He suggested the USG buy Turkish HDRs as part of the economic compensation package (which he claimed had not been finalized). Dewey agreed that we would look at this possibility, but asked for an answer on our HDR request. Note: MFA subsequently told us orally that they are inclined to approve siting of HDRs, but that further intra-GOT consultation was required on this issue before the Turks can provide a definitive answer. End Note.

¶12. (SBU) WFP Issues: Dewey raised several potential problems facing the WFP's plan to supply food via Turkey to Iraq. He noted that WFP planned to import wheat for milling in Turkey, and urged that Turkey facilitate this as much as possible by reducing bureaucratic formalities and by refraining from collection of customs or other duties. He also raised a potential problem with truck standards. Finally, Dewey suggested that it might become useful to channel WFP supplies through Turkey but using Syrian ports, and asked the MFA to consider this. Sensoy responded that he did not foresee customs problems with wheat imports. Turkey had sufficient trucks meeting Turkish standards to carry out WFP's mission. Sensoy added that he would have to look into the question of shipping through Syrian ports. While Mersin and Iskenderun ports are now designated for aid use, Sensoy raised the possibility that WFP activities might have to shift from either or both ports, if they were needed for military use, to other facilities, such as Toros (private port).

Turkish General Staff -----

¶13. (C) A/S Dewey, accompanied by MCLC Maj. General Osman, met with Maj. General Suphi Acar, of the Turkish General Staff J5. Acar seemed reluctant to discuss humanitarian planning and Turkish intentions in northern Iraq, and a junior MFA representative who was present in the meeting repeatedly took the initiative in responding to the U.S. delegation. Acar stated that the Turkish army did not plan to go too deep into Iraq, but that its role would be limited to protecting the Turcoman and fighting terrorists. He added that TGS would like to coordinate with the USG on humanitarian assistance and more generally on its presence in northern Iraq. A/S Dewey emphasized that the USG will coordinate its humanitarian assistance through the UN agencies and ICRC.

Turkish Red Crescent (TRC) -----

¶14. (SBU) TRC President Ertan Gonen told A/S Dewey that his organization was capable of providing blankets, heating, food and hygiene kits for 100,000 DPs. He explained that, if all TRC resources were deployed, the organization could handle 276,000 DPs, but that TRC needed to keep a portion of its resources in reserve for domestic contingencies. Gonen acknowledged ICRC's mandate to provide aid in conflict zones, and said that if ICRC lacked resources, TRC stood ready to assist. He maintained that security (e.g. terrorism) was Turkey's greatest concern in connection with any DP crisis, based on the experience of 1991. Gonen also said that a protocol with UN agencies might be signed March ¶14. Note: The protocol has not yet been signed. End Note. Gonen told A/S Dewey that TRC enjoyed close cooperation with the American Red Cross, and that U.S. NGO Americare had visited TRC recently.

Update on UN Agencies, Contingency Planning -----

¶15. (U) The U.S. delegation met over lunch with members of UN Turkey's country team, led by Resident Coordinator Alfredo Witschi-Cestari. Andre LaPerriere, UNICEF Northern Iraq Erbil Office Coordinator, Jean-Marie Fakhouri, UNHCR Regional Coordinator for the Iraq Situation, and Amin Awad, UNHCR Deputy Regional Coordinator for the Iraq Situation, also participated.

¶16. (SBU) Coordination: Witschi-Cestari told the delegation that the UN is concerned about security, and that it asked

U.S. military not to site its offices (possible Humanitarian Assistance Coordination Center) HACC) in Dyarbakir in the same building now housing UN emergency offices. Dewey described his proposal to set up a civilian coordination mechanism including the GOT, UN agencies and the USG.

17. (SBU) UNICEF on Northern Iraq: LaPerriere said that UNICEF had developed a plan for northern Iraq that sought to make each of the three governorates self-sustaining in the event of a disruption in the supply chain. He noted that the Syrian route may be a problem as the GOS has been insisting on a fee of USD 400 per truck for transit. In northern Iraq, there are five sites for prepositioned supplies (medicine, blankets, winter clothes, water purification equipment). LaPerriere said that the estimated displacement in the north was likely to amount to about 250,000 persons, with the greatest problems in Zakho and Mosul. He estimated that about 40 percent of these DPs could be absorbed by local families. Shelter, fuel, and water are now the chief concerns, though the Iranians may be able to supply some fuel. UNICEF said that each governorate in N. Iraq has an emergency committee and they have worked with UNICEF to train people for emergency response.

18. (C) LaPerriere emphasized Kurdish hostility to Turkish intervention in the region, opining that the Kurds in northern Iraq would prefer to be subject to the Baghdad regime than to the Turks. He stated the Turks are in fact building some camps in northern Iraq, and that some appeared to be completed, but UN staff were denied access to them. (See also septel on USAID/DART meeting with LaPerriere.)

19. (SBU) World Food Program Issues in Turkey: WFP Emergency Coordinator John Murray stated that WFP's registration in Turkey lapsed in the 1990,s and that WFP was experiencing significant delays in its attempt to reregister. However, WFP has been able to operate effectively in Turkey under UNDP cover. Murray said that WFP planned to import wheat flour, rather than wheat, in the first two months following disruption of the OFF Program. WFP inquired with the Turkish Grain Board about procuring wheat locally, but it has not received a response from the agency. Murray said that there may be tax consequences for WFP if it mills wheat in Turkey. He also noted the intermittent closure of the Turkish-Iraqi border to WFP trucks, and said that only 28 of its 41 trucks had made it across.

20. (SBU) Kirkuk/Mosul: In a follow up meeting on March 13, Jean-Marie Fakhouri, UNHCR Regional Coordinator for the Iraq Situation, Amin Awad, UNHCR Deputy Regional Coordinator for the Iraq Situation, told A/S Dewey that the return of primarily Kurdish displaced persons to Kirkuk and Mosul could spark conflict. Fakhouri said that available information indicated that some 100,000 to 200,000 DPs have made preparations and are poised to move quickly. He asked the USG to provide advance warning of those movements if at all possible.

21. (C) UN Responsibilities in Iraq: On the UN plan to give the UN Office of Project Services (UN OPS) protection responsibilities for internally displaced persons (IDPs) in northern Iraq and IOM responsibility for the center and south, Fakhouri expressed some skepticism that these agencies were prepared for these duties. (In his meeting with the previous day, Witschi-Cestari shared the same concerns about IOM and UN Habitat. Habitat would have responsibility to provide some shelter for IDPs. Neither UN OPS nor UN Habitat has extensive experience as an emergency responder. IOM has no international staff inside Iraq, and will have to rely on local agents to implement their mandate to protect IDPs.) Fakhouri said that UNHCR has been focused on its mission to provide assistance and protection in neighboring countries and along Iraq,s borders to refugees and displaced persons, but it is not well prepared to deal with DPs in Iraq and would prefer to work through the ICRC there. Nonetheless, he noted that the Secretary General may task UNHCR to redirect its aid from the borders to IDPs within Iraq. Fakhouri also expressed concern about restarting the OFF Program during and after the conflict, noting that it would take about 8 weeks for the UN WFP to take over the program from the GOI. WFP,s planned 120,000 tons per month of food rations are a fraction of the current 500,000 tons imported and not all households have laid aside food reserves. Food shortages are possible before the OFF is fully operational again. Fakhouri pointed to the potential for terrorist activity in Kuwait, which could launch an unexpected movement of persons within Kuwait and from Kuwait to Saudi Arabia.

122. (SBU) A/S Dewey met with Carl Naucner, Head of Delegation, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), on March 13 to discuss TRC,s role in providing humanitarian assistance in northern Iraq, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, (ICRC,) relations with the GOT. Naucner told us that IFRC had pressed TRC President Gonen not to cross into northern Iraq to provide aid in violation of the rules and principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent movement, but opined that TRC could be &pushed8 into northern Iraq by the GOT.

123. (SBU) Naucner said the ICRC had sent a letter to TRC explaining that a TRC presence in Iraq would be fully legal only under the following circumstances: as a uniformed auxiliary to the Turkish armed forces responsible only for medical support; with the consent of the Iraqi Red Crescent (which he noted is completely hostile to a TRC presence in Iraq); or in coordination with the ICRC. The letter reminded TRC that, even with ICRC permission, TRC would merely have the status of a &Participating National Society8 and could be one of several national societies authorized to provide relief. According to Naucner, TRC,s written reply acknowledged the requirement to coordinate with the ICRC, but said it would do so when IFRC provided logistical support, implying that TRC did not fully understand or accept ICRC,s lead role. Naucner has suggested to Gonen that he get in touch with ICRC to discuss TRC,s possible role in providing aid.

124. (SBU) Naucner told Dewey that IFRC would not support TRC activities in northern Iraq unless it obtains a clear mandate to operate there, although he hinted that IFRC could show flexibility if TRC operated close to the frontier and if the circumstances (difficult terrain, lack of alternatives) required TRC to respond on Iraqi rather than Turkish territory. He said IFRC would primarily have a monitoring/reporting role for other donors with respect to TRC, and might also deploy several media and logistical specialists.

125. (SBU) ICRC Status: Naucner told us that the GOT agreed to ICRC,s request to open a temporary office in Turkey, but imposed a number of conditions that would make it impossible for ICRC to fulfill its mandate. He said that ICRC would post someone to Turkey during a possible conflict in Iraq, with or without formal status from the GOT.

126. (SBU) TRC Preparedness: According to Naucner, TRC staff are prepared and well-trained to cope with disasters, but he fears that they are susceptible to Turkish military interference. He said TRC has not moved supplies into northern Iraq, but has stockpiled goods in Silopi. Naucner,s deputy, who is in Silopi, reported that some of the camp locations on Turkish territory are now under two meters of snow and are not suitable locations.

127. (SBU) IFRC also criticized the TRC,s/GOT,s uncoordinated appeal for relief supplies. Naucner noted that the Turks had requested tents from NATO to shelter 276,000 persons, and had also requested supplies from other donors (septel).

KDP/PUK on Possible Turkish Military Intervention, Appeal for Humanitarian Supplies

128. (C) Safeen Diyazee, Ankara Representative, Kurdistan Democratic Party, and Bahros Galali, Ankara Representative, Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, expressed concern about possible Turkish intervention in northern Iraq and outlined their humanitarian contingency planning. Galali noted that the Turks cite Kurdish designs on Kirkuk and Mosul as a rationale for Turkish military intervention. However, he emphasized that some 250,000 displaced Kurds are only seeking return to their homes, that the KDP and PUK do not oppose the return of Iraqis of Arab, Turkmen and other ethnic origin to their homes in Kirkuk and Mosul, and that the oil resources of this region belong to all the people of Iraq. Diyazee told Dewey that the Turks were using humanitarian concern as a pretext for intervention, and that there would be no wave of displaced persons from the PUK and KDP regions. He added that Turkish intervention was an unnecessary distraction from the war against Baghdad. Based on their contacts with senior Iraqi military officers, Dizayee does believe the Iraqi army would destroy the oilfields in Kirkuk and Mosul.

129. (SBU) Dizayee said that the KDP had developed extensive contingency plans for humanitarian assistance and that these

had been shared with USAID and the Humanitarian Planning Team, but emphasized that resources were urgently needed. KDP has identified potential camp locations for displaced persons from central Iraq as well as for Iraqi POWs and defectors. Dizayee pointed out that Baghdad has blocked some supplies (particularly food and fuel) for northern Iraq under the OFF Program, and that the north has thus not been able to build stocks in preparation for a possible conflict. He added that non-emergency medical treatment was being deferred to conserve medicine. Dizayee stated that Peace Wind, a Japanese NGO, had pledged USD 2.6 million in assistance in the event of a crisis. He said KDP had provided an inventory of needed relief materials to USAID and said he expected help in filling those gaps.

Comment/Recommendation

130. (C) Embassy will follow up with MFA and resident UN agencies to secure agreement to the proposed humanitarian coordination mechanism and to storing HDRs in Turkey, but the GOT may not formally respond and go on a crisis footing until and unless hostilities in Iraq begin. Fakhouri,s comment that delays in restarting the OFF under WFP management could leave the Iraqi population short of food is worrisome and we would encourage Washington agencies to address the issue on an urgent basis.
PEARSON